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# CELEBRATE BICENTENNIAL YEAR IN BOSTON AT THE NATIONAL INTERFAITH CONFERENCE ON RELIGION AND ARCHITECTURE

July 6 - 8, 1976 Copley Plaza Hotel

# **VALUES '76: TRADITION - TRANSITION**

#### **FEATURING EXHIBITS:**

Recent Art and Architecture

#### **WORKSHOPS:**

Plan for Restoration and Development of Religious Facilities

Financing Costs of Restoration

Art and Decoration in Restoration of Religious Facilities

A Case Study of Renovation Project Involving Panel of Experts

#### TOURS:

Points of Historic Interest
Trinity Church
King's Chapel
Old North Church
Points of Contemporary Interest
1st and 2nd Church, Marlborough St. - Paul
Rudolph
Charles River Synagogue - Childs, Bertman,
Tseckares

MIT Chapel - Eero Saarinen

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## **NOTES & COMMENTS**

#### A Message from Eldon F. Wood, AIA, President, GRA

The 1976 National Interfaith Conference on Religion and Architecture convenes July 6 in Boston, Mass. at the Copley Plaza Hotel. Information regarding program, exhibits and registration is included in this issue of FAITH & FORM. It will be an occasion for celebration—participation—communication.

Boston is an auspicious choice for the Conference this Bicentennial year. In addition to being a spawning ground of the American Revolution, Boston's architectural heritage is a rich reflection of 200 years of American taste and culture. The Conference program has been arranged to bring the city's architectural setting into the total Conference experience. And the Boston Bicentennial Commission has done an outstanding job in arranging activities which will be meaningful and of interest to all age groups. The Conference hotel offers special rates for those who may wish to bring the family-come earlystay late.

Registrants will find many opportunities for learning and for participation in a Conference program designed to meet a variety of needs. Workshop topics reflect basic and current concerns. The architectural exhibit is the only national exhibit today focusing not only on spaces for the worshiping community-but on projects sponsored by the religious community as well. The arts exhibit is of equal importance with its emphasis on work being done and its indication of current trends in artistic expression and the theology it reflects.

No discussion of the value of a National Conference can omit the important plus of the fellowship which it encourages. In a congenial setting, away from the marketplace and among fellow professionals and friends, the mind and spirit can re-

lax, recuperate and recharge. For a brief period there are no reduced budgets—no leaking valves or taciturn committees, and one can discuss with one's peers many of the important ideas and concerns that need a proper sounding board.

The Conference offers an opportunity to celebrate. Much was said about celebration ten or so years ago, but there has been that sad interval wherein circumstances forced an emphasis on condemnation, castigation and demonstration. Now the time is ripe for the restoration of celebration—in Boston, July 6-8. Join us.

# **Bicentennial Exhibitions of Religious Architecture**

As their contribution to the Bicentennial celebration, St. John's Episcopal Church of Lafayette Square (Washington, D.C.) will present a retrospective exhibition of American religious architrecture. Designed in 1816 by Benjamin Latrobe, one of our foremost Federal period architects, and nicknamed "the Church of the Presidents," St. John's own architectural and historic background provided the inspiration for this project. The exhibition, scheduled to open at the end of April, will survey the general progression of architectural styles in American religious buildings and will comprise approximately 70 representative religious structures dating from 1632 to the present day. By focusing on the architectural aspect of American religious life, the exhibition hopes to make Americans more aware of the living heritage inherent in the religious structures which surround them.

A 64 page catalogue will be produced in conjunction with the exhibition. After May 1 it can be purchased from St. John's Church, Lafayette Square, Washington, D.C. 20005.

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# WORSHIP, LITURGY & BUILDING\*

Dr. Laurence H. Stookey

Asst. Professor of Preaching & Worship Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, D.C.

In designing buildings for worship it is not sufficient to remember the counsel that "form follows function." For liturgical architecture the rule is: "Form follows function; and faith precedes both."

Unfortunately, the relationship between faith as expressed in doctrine and faith as expressed in the functions of worship has often been overlooked. But the past quarter century has witnessed a renewal of interest in the theology of worship. This renewal is ecumenical and has important implications for liturgical architecture.

In a brief article it is impossible to outline the theology of worship of each denomination. But it is possible to consider together the views of Roman Catholics, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Anglican and Methodist bodies. For despite their great differences in the past regarding worship, all of these groups are sensing that they have a great deal in common.

This is not as surprising as it may appear at first if Reformation history is carefully considered. Luther and Calvin were the spiritual fathers of the four Protestant families involved. These two men were the liturgical conservatives of the Reformation. Unlike Zwingli and the Anabaptists (the radicals), Luther and Calvin retained sacraments, even though reducing the number from seven to two. Thus these Protestant groups share with Roman Catholics important assumptions about the nature of Christian worship.

Even stronger reasons for an emerging consensus among these denominations are to be found in recent theological developments. Through biblical studies the Hebrew roots which nourished the faith and worship of the early church have been rediscovered. Historical studies have affected the way both Protestants

\*Extract from Dr. Stookey's address at GRA Regional Conference, Duke University, October 1975. and Roman Catholics look at the Reformation and the eras which preceded it. As a result we are now in a situation quite unlike that of twenty-five years ago.

At one time Lutherans considered Luther to be normative with respect to worship. Presbyterians consulted only Calvinistic precedents. Anglicans and Methodists looked to the Book of Common Prayer as the rule. Roman Catholics steadfastly adhered to formulations set forth in 1570 following the Council of Trent. Everything was neat and orderly. If, for example, you had attended a service of the Lord's Supper twenty-five years ago, without knowing the name of the church or looking at a service book, you could have discovered whether you were in a Roman, Presbyterian, Lutheran or Methodist congregation. Today this is not the case; and therefore neither is it true that denominations need distinctive architectural settings for their serv-

The importance of this emerging ecumenical understanding of worship can hardly be overestimated. But the news of the change has not yet reached some local congregations which, when designing a building, may be quite content to perpetuate outdated patterns. Therefore it is important that the principal points of the faith be understood by those who determine architectural form, even if it is not understood by those who carry out liturgical functions in a local setting.

While it is necessary for an architect to determine the liturgical needs of a congregation, it may also be necessary for the architect to educate the congregation concerning new patterns of worship. To be sure, such education may be subtle. The architect may simply suggest that the congregation consult its denominational worship commission or a professor of liturgics in a denominational seminary. But this kind of direction is

necessary. Woe to that congregation which designs a building from the perspective of a denominational worship manual published fifteen years ago because it does not know that a new manual is already at the printers!

While details as to specfic denominational rites cannot be provided here, certain trends can be described. Five central areas of faith which bear directly upon the functions and forms of liturgical space will be considered.

- 1. There is a new emphasis on preaching. Since Vatican II the Roman Church has taken preaching more seriously; a sermon or homily is now prescribed for at least the principal Mass each Sunday. While some Protestants attempted to pronounce preaching dead during the 1960s, the sermon refused to cooperate. Pastors who once preferred to stand in the center aisle and conduct group discussions or show slides are now back in their pulpits. Preaching aids are being published with renewed enthusiasm; both their authors and their purchasers are freely crossing denominational lines. Clearly, preaching is back. Therefore the role of the pulpit in architectural design must be examined carefully.
- 2. There is also a renewed understanding of and appreciation for the Lord's Supper (Mass, Eucharist, Holy Communion). The Supper is being celebrated more frequently among those who once observed it only two or three times a year. More importantly, the perception of what the Supper means has changed. Formerly both Roman and Protestants approached the Lord's Table with somber countenance. The Mass was considered to be a re-presentation (sic) of the sacrificial suffering and death of Christ. For many Protestants communion was virtually a funeral for Jesus, characterized by mournful hymns, hushed voices and black vestments.

In both quarters the Supper is now a much more joyous occasion - as it was in the ancient church. The keynote of the supper is thanksgiving to God for the resurrection and presence of Christ. This aspect of joy and celebration has implications for the importance and design of eucharistic space.

- 3. A renewed interest in Baptism and its relation to Confirmation is emerging. Except for Presbyterians, all of the denominations previously mentioned have published official or provisional liturgies for these rites within the past three years. These new services resemble one another far more than they resemble what preceded them in their respective denominations. Baptism is seen as having an integral relation to the biblical heritage as well as new importance in the life of the congregation. This should affect the size, design and placement of the font. (For example, the rather tired symbol of the baptismal shell might be replaced with symbols representing creation, the flood of Noah, the Exodus, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. These motifs, central in the early church, were obscured for centuries but now are receiving new attention in contemporary liturgies.)
- 4. There is renewed stress upon the inter-relationship of preaching and the sacraments. The elements of worship are seen as necessary complements. Preaching is essentially a rational activity; the sacraments are essentially non-rational (though not irrational). Through both together the Word of God is most effectively proclaimed. On the one hand, God approaches us through the mind, and on the other hand, through the senses. Only a proper balance of sermon and sacraments allows for communication of the Gospel through the full range of human perception.

This complementary relationship of preaching and sacraments should be supported visually through the placement of the pulpit, table and font. The appropriate juxtaposition of these furnishings requires deliberate planning.

5. There is a recovery of the corporate nature of Christian worship. Often congregations have been looked upon as aggregates of individuals who gather to do what they could do almost as well in private. According to this view, public worship exists primarily for psychological and practical reasons: the worshipper gets a greater "lift" out of hearing 200 people sing; and it is impractical for the preacher to visit 75 or 100 families regularly and deliver ser-

mons in each home. But this rationale for worship is now being judged insufficient.

There is a more basic reason for corporate worship. The Christian assembly is intended to be an organic whole, the company of the faithful bound up together forming what St. Paul called "the body of Christ." Public worship is qualitatively as well as quantitatively different from private worship. There is a crucial difference between a Christian congregation and an audience which gathers in a public place to hear a concert or a speaker. Furthermore, worship is not to be judged by asking the question, "What do I get out of it?" Instead, the central focus is upon what the believers put into worship as their grateful response to the saving activity of God. When apprehended this way, the corporate nature of worship has important implications for the three central liturgical activities already discussed.

When viewed as corporate in nature, preaching is not religious remarks addressed to individuals by a learned person; preaching is the Word of God coming through the preacher and addressing both preacher and congregation. The preacher also stands under the authority of the Gospel; and the congregation cannot respond to the sermon without taking into account the inter-relationship of its members.

The corporate nature of the Lord's Supper reveals that this rite is not an action of individuals who receive the elements of bread and wine each for his or her personal benefit. Rather, the communicants form the body of Christ, the Church, which together receive the body of Christ through the eucharistic elements. This gift is given of God in order that those who accept the sacrament may be strengthened for service to God's whole creation.

Nor is Baptism a rite which pertains only (or even primarily) to the individual receiving it. Baptism is the sign of God's action and speaks to us of his love which constitutes the church and incorporates us into the body of Christ. The baptismal service is a congregational occasion on which the people welcome new

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# **CHURCH ARCHITECTURE OF THE 1970s\***

Dr. James F. White

Perkins School of Theology Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas

Midway through the 1970s is a good time to look at what has happened to church architecture in recent years. Change occurs so gradually that it is only by a look backwards that we can see the distance we have come. Yet, when we look back over even so short a time as a decade, we find just how different the pace-setting church buildings of today are from those built around 1965. Recognition of these differences can give us perspective on where we are going now.

I must confess that I write this with some sense of personal involvement. My book, Protestant Worship and Church Architecture (1964) was used, for better or for worse, by a couple of thousand building committees in the 1960s. Now out of print, I have no further stake in it. But it does help me compare those things which seemed to me so true and obvious when it was written in 1963 with what I can observe today. The book was written, of course, before the Consittution on the Sacred Liturgy had been promulgated or anyone had heard the word "experimentation" applied to worship. Some still have not, but most Christian worship, both Catholic and Protestant, has undergone major changes in the last dozen years. What has happened architecturally is a good outward and visible sign of those changes.

I shall try to describe the differences, then, between the pace-setting church buildings of the mid-sixties and those of the mid-seventies. In either case, we are dealing with the minority of the churches actually built; most new churches, then as now, reflect a worship-as-usual attitude. People are still keeping the faith by mimicking the buildings built in New England from 1790 to 1830, as if to keep a golden age alive. And just as one assumes that gothic at

long last has been priced out of the market, one finds oil-rich communities in Texas or Oklahoma who had not heard. The pace-setting buildings, I would take it, are those most widely publicized in the architectural journals, in FAITH & FORM, and those granted awards at such meetings as the Guild for Religious Architecture conferences.

Since 1965 we have gone through a period of revulsion against church architecture in which many of us wondered whether a church concerned about mission had any reason to build. It must be said to the credit of many of the finest church architects that they were raising the question: "Who needs us?" just as vigorously as the clergy were debating the morality of building. We are past that phase, I think, and better off because it occurred. For it made us see that a building can be a tool in mission and that that is its only purpose. And it made us realize just what a powerful tool architecture can be, for good or evil. Several of the pioneering congregations that began by denying the usual pattern of building ended up doing just that. As we got more and more into experimentation, we realized how much the building sets the agenda and that good buildings could work with us just as much as bad ones could thwart us. Architecture, we learned, opens possibilities for us or takes them away. So we came out of this stage with a much healthier respect for architecture as a tool in mission than we had had earlier.

I would like to analyze five basic differences between the churches we were building in the 1960s and those we are building today. Perhaps this will help give us some guidance for the next few years.

One of the principal factors affecting church building in recent years has been neither theological nor aesthetic. It is simply a matter of economics. The 1960s saw the last flush of a booming era of church building.

<sup>\*</sup>Reprinted by permission from *Liturgy* (May 1975) (c) The Liturgical Conference, 1330 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005 (1975).

For the first of that period, over a billion dollars per year was being spent in this country for church buildings. As the sixties progressed, that sum was reduced; but even more significant was that the number of projects was diminishing as inflation eroded the amount of building the sum represented. The increasing cost of money was another factor in postponing and diminishing building projects. Now that money has become even tighter and building costs even higher, the amount of new building of any type has dropped still further.

This may be more of a blessing than we had realized. One of the regrettable factors about churches built in the fifties and sixties was that they were so fine and expensive. As our needs in worship changed, we found that we had built terribly expensive buildings which fought any adaptation. How hard it is to change something built out of cut stone! Indeed, what a sense of permanence and unchanging liturgical life such an anachronistic building material suggests!

I am sure that many others have felt the same urge I sometimes have when worshiping in these expensive, cold and formal buildings. I want to get a can of spray paint and spray some bright red crosses and words of hope on elegant Georgian columns or over intricate gothic arches. Any sign of life would help. Some of these elegant, expensive churches make me crave the store-front political office where anything relevant or impish gets taped up on the peeling plaster walls. How much more life such places have!

Frankly, a lot of those buildings were so expensive that we are forever intimidated by them. The pastor worked hard to raise the money, the donors are still around, and the word is "hands off." Had we been poorer, had our hopes been more modest, we might be better served by these buildings today.

Economic circumstances have changed that and quite possibly to our advantage. God does work in mysterious ways! Many of the best churches built since World War II were those built in Europe where money was tight. There was no extra

money for gilding the lily. Many of the new European churches are honest, direct, and straightforward. As a result, they often have an aesthetic quality that many of ours miss. One American architect has a slide show of a congregation that got more and more money and kept adding things to the interior of their church. He ends by showing the original slide and, without a word, the point is clear: they didn't know when to stop. Economics are teaching us to know when to stop. We are learning the discipline of poverty.

This means that in recent years we have had to concentrate on essentials. What is absolutely basic for our use? And what is not? We are forced to ask these questions again and again and to concentrate on *utility*, building only what we absolutely must have and use. The rest we can do without; we may be better off without it. Had the same economic factors been operative in the early sixties as today, we might be better served by what we built then than we now are.

#### III

A second major change is closely related to the first. A change in construction methods has been forced upon us largely because of economic factors. Today we would not think (though some might dream) of building a traditional timber-framed barn when we can build a post barn with metal sheathing so much cheaper. The same thing applies to churches. When you have to look again and again at the building costs per square foot, you begin to accept some realities you never before contemplated. This too may be a blessing.

One of the best churches I have seen recently was built with the same tiltslab construction as the supermarket next door and at a remarkably low cost. Other new churches are being built with construction methods we usually associate with warehousescement block walls, flat roofs and exposed steel trusses. Supermarkets and warehouses, buildings calculated to return the maximum yield for the minimum expense, these are going to be our models from here on in. And why not? The church should be every bit as concerned about making the most of available resources as any business firm is. The irony is that these building methods can produce churches whose utility is just as great or greater than elegant cut-stone structures. In the hands of a competent architect, I would argue, they can be buildings of equal beauty. The challenge of limited resources may enhance the beauty. At least you know when to stop, if you ever get started!

Construction methods that we have associated solely with secular building types are going to be used more and more for churches. Theologically it makes sense too. As Dean Joseph Matthews says: "He's a sneaky God." We find the holy in the midst of the ordinary; sacred and secular are kith and kin.

Many of the best new churches have shown a different sense of scale. We are more inclined now to look at a church as a social part of the townscape which fits in with its neighbors rather than as a monument which dominates them. For too long our ideal was the New England village church that provided a landmark for the surrounding countryside. We simply transplanted these churches to the city. I know of one ultra-elegant Georgian church in a southern city that has the words "night cometh" on the clock face of its tower. When high rise bachelor apartments surrounded it, those quaint words took on new and less theological meaning.

Recently we have developed a sense of church buildings built on a domestic scale. One of the best new churches in the Minneapolis area was deliberately scaled to the dimensions of the surrounding single-family residences. An irony of much historic preservation has been our tendency to preserve the great house but to ignore the shacks of slaves (in this country) or serfs (in Russia) that made the great house possible. Perhaps today we have finally realized that the church belongs in the village, gathered about the gates of the great house, and not on the broad lawns of the estate itself. A servant people does not need mansions. Churches are going to complement neighborhoods now rather than dominate them.

con't. next page

Writing as I am in an impoverished part of Vermont, where virtually all new building permits are issued for pre-fabs and mobile homes, this may well mean more and more use of standardized building components in churches too. But then we are only talking about extent. Ever since nails began to be made in factories instead of locally, we have had standardization to a certain degree. In my farmhouse no two nails are the same for they were made by hand before 1800. But in the village there are several houses that came intact out of the same factory. The larger the standardized component becomes, the greater the challenge to its use in a creative fashion.

Using a domestic scale as our point of reference is nothing new. One need not go back as far as the early church for point of contact. Dissenters' chapels in eighteenth-century England were deliberately built on domestic models to avoid destruction by establishment mobs. And many of the establishment's own churches in eighteenth-century Virginia, built at remote country crossroads where towers would have no use, are clearly domestic in appearance. The same was true of many meetinghouses erected in New England until about 1790. Perhaps most consistent were the Quaker meetinghouses which, except for the two doors (for men and women separately), almost always resembled dwelling houses.

As we move from a monumental scale to a domestic one, we discover some advantages we had missed before. As we look for "that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations" which the fathers of Vatican II tell us is "the right and duty" of Christian people "by reason of their baptism," we realize the advantages of intimacy in liturgical space. Much of what seems desirable to us in worship today can be enhanced by a smaller edifice and defeated by a vast monument. I once heard Pope Paul VI preach against triumphalism in the church but St. Peter's Basilica shouted him down.

The most endearing quality about so many small country churches is how intimately they involve the whole

congregation present in the liturgical action. There are no dead spaces, no columns to hide behind; everyone is right out on the fifty-yard line. I think we shall see much more church building that is constructed on a more domestic scale where everyone feels a part of the family of God, gathered about the Lord's table. And the construction methods may well reflect those ancillary structures built to serve the neighborhoodthe convenience grocery store, the service station, and the drive-in bank. lust because these structures are usually ugly is no reason to assume that they must be so. Indeed, the church could perform a social service by demonstrating that standardized building components can be used in creative and attractive ways.

#### П

Moving toward specifics, we notice a significant change in a third area, namely the exterior profile of new church buildings. The characteristic pace-setter church of the 1960s sported a high and dramatic roof line. Indeed, when one looks at the buildings most highly publicized through magazine articles and jury selections of the time, they almost look like a study in comparative roofs. By contrast, many of the most interesting churches built in the last few years have flat roofs and present a low profile.

The high and dramatic roof of the church of the 1960s is almost a trademark of that time. The A-frame and the parabolic curve were among the most noticeable. Uel Ramey's Holy Cross Lutheran in Wichita, Kansas, built in 1953, was surely one of the earliest of these and their numbers multiplied throughout the sixties. Many other unique roof lines were explored and the buildings of Victor Lundy became models of poetic hovering roofs. Frequently these dramatic roofs were combined with skylights or clerestory windows to create interior light effects often focused on the altar or pulpit. Frequently the effect was that of baroque architecture but it was combined with a technical virtousity that baroque architects would have envied. We must acknowledge the creativity that often went into the design of those soaring roofs of the 1960s and the variety and beauty that frequently resulted.

But is is significant that during the late 1960s such forward-looking architects as Uel Ramey and Edward Sövik began building churches in which the roof was inconspicuous and the profile not particularly high. Such examples have proliferated in recent years.

Among the various emotive factors that people associate with the interior of a church, unusual height seems to be the most constant. One can get into quite an argument whether church interiors should be brightly colored or dark, well lighted or dim, roughly textured or smooth. People's power of association with what "looks like a church" will vary on these factors but almost all seem to agree with the demand for unusual height. It is interesting that exceptional height should be the last of these emotive factors to be questioned. Of course, buildings with low exterior profiles may still give the illusion of excessive height on the inside by focusing light downwards and the shadowy cross-crossing of trusses overhead may suggest dark recesses that can pass for height.

Still, we cannot resist raising some theological questions. Is the move away from high profile buildings simply a matter of economics and new construction methods? Or is it a deeper move in worship away from a stress on God as transcendent to a recovery of the sense of God's immanence? Certainly the economics of building today are tighter. But would we still want those tall structures even if we could afford them? The more restrained and modest buildings of our time show a move towards a simplicity that we previously failed to recognize as important. And it may reflect a deeper sense of the God who meets us in the midst of a people rather than up yonder in the distant haze. The flat-roof building may speak more eloquently of God than did the dramatic buildings of the previous decade.

#### IV

A fourth change, closely related to the exterior profile, has come about regarding the *interior* orientation of the building. The high roof lines of the 1960s usually focused attention on one spot of the interior, either by zooming downward dramatically or by soaring skyward spectacularly. The same purpose was accomplished by lighting too. But today's building is likely to be non-directional. There is not likely to be any obvious "holy place" nor even a definite architectural focus. If there is to be such a place, it must be created for the occasion by the arrangement of the people and furnishings, rather than being predetermined by the architect.

I am not speaking especially of buildings designed to be multi-purpose which are often deliberately vague as to orientation and devoid of commitment to any special function. Such buildings have often, and with reason, been criticized as being good for everything and excellent for nothing. Spaces designed exclusively for worship usage have also moved to a non-directional approach.

Several factors are at work here. One of them is a deepened sense of the presence of Christ in the liturgical assembly itself and not just on the altar or in a tabernacle. The Quaker meetinghouse was often non-directional in reflecting a sole concern with the Spirit-filled congregation. Similarly, today's church may be more people-centered by making congregational space the only real liturgical space. Or it may be an unconscious recognition of the Spirit that blows where it wills! At any rate, separate and distinct chancels or sanctuaries, high and lifted up, seem to be increasingly relics of the past. The architectural features that tended to focus attention on such areas have been jettisoned in recent years.

Another reason for such change is that the liturgical usages of recent years are indeterminate themselves. Indeed, we may have just recently passed beyond experimentation by having incorporated it into our history so that by now innovation has almost become a standard part of worship for many congregations. This means that the interior ought to be indeterminate so that whatever needs to be done on each occasion can determine the arrangement and focus of the building, not unchanging steel and concrete.

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Christ Church, United Methodist Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Architects
Harold E. Wagoner, FAIA & Assoc.

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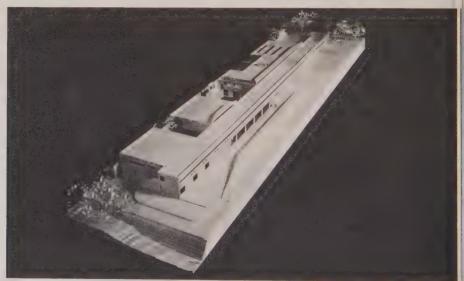
# **NEW PROJECTS OF INTEREST**

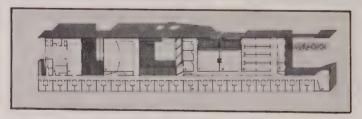
#### **Monastery of Saint Clare**

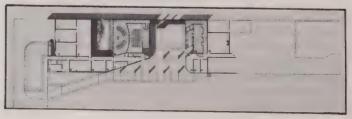
Architects: Dagit/Saylor Philadelphia, Pa.

In the ten years since Vatican II, abrupt change has been seen in religious attitudes. It is extremely rare that new monasteries are designed today and few architects have the opportunity of working in this area. The architects involved with the Monastery of Saint Clare stated that their early dialogue with the sisters revealed an awareness that monastic life consisted of two basic intertwined life styles, the Private and the Communal. Thus the placing of the cells in one single line produced also a processional way, binding private and communal through a linking corridor. The ramp allowed the corridor gallery to overlook the communal spaces while connecting everything symbolically to the chapel.

Since the chapel had to be divided: into public and Community use, the garden was incorporated into the Community's space as part of the chapel while the public gets a glimpse of it. Here the public and the Community come together to form as separate but together congregation. The architects feel that the building; answers new questions about monastic life in the 20th Century. They departed from the ancient cloister form to satisfy the modern spirit but have: preserved the tradition of monasticism and its unifying qualities. It is: their belief that this attitude reaffirms the spirit of Vatican II and its: desire to create a more humanistic: approach to religion-and a more human approach to humanity.







#### Peachtree Road United Methodist Church New Fellowship Hall and Remodeling Project

Architect: Jack Durham Haynes
Atlanta, Ga.

Peachtree Road United Methodist Church had been a suburban church—and now found itself an urban church in ministry to a diverse community of people with varying life styles. An eight-year study, evaluation and long-range planning process demonstrated the need for enlarging and renovating the facilities.

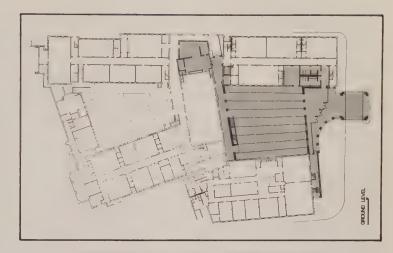
The changes in its membership—more single adults, more retired people, more members without children—were becoming apparent and required differing concepts of mission. It was felt that the size of the congregation (4600 members) required a Fellowship Hall with a seating capacity of at least 500. Jack Durham Haynes, architect for the new Fellowship Hall and remodeling project, has written:

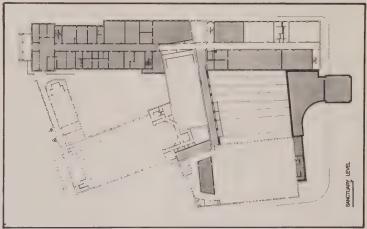
"I have never been convinced that building a larger hall solely for the purpose of serving more food to more people was really worth the money involved.

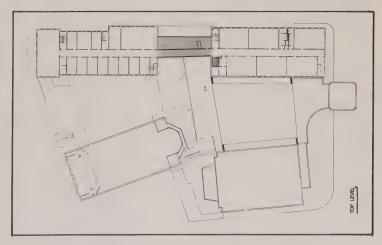
"However, as I thought more and more about the changes taking place in our church, its changing parish and changing mission, and the nature and purpose of Christian Fellowship, I began to realize that we weren't talking about just a bigger place in which to serve food to more people; we were talking about a new kind of place.

"I began to realize that what we need is a space not set aside for special uses but a space to which we will feel drawn and in which we feel drawn to each other; a space in the heart of the church buildings in which everyone experiences the feeling of having arrived in God's house—a space in which we all feel at home."









# **FUNCTION & BUILDINGS\***

Dr. John H. Westerhoff III

Assoc. Prof. of Religion and Education Duke University Divinity School, Durham, N.C.

My definition of a professor is important to this address: a professor is one who professes what he or she believes at the moment in order to stimulate others to think for themselves. With that in mind, I confess that I am likely to make numerous bold and undefended remarks. I do so for the purpose of discussion.

My theme is simply this: we shape out architecture and our architecture shapes us. Recall the debate prior to restoring the British House of Commons. Churchill feared that any new design which departed from the original intimate pattern where opponents faced each other across narrow aisles would radically affect English government. His instincts were more than likely correct. Change a people's space and in time you change their lives. Space affects our world view and values. In terms of faith, architecture is second only to ritual in its influence upon us. It is regrettable therefore that so many persons, for all intents and purpose, ignore the significance of architectural design. Congregations often ask architects to design buildings without being aware that they will be an expression of faith and an influence on those who live within them.

Consider learning space and our behavior as teachers. Most classrooms in universities once were (and are) designed by and for those who believe the best and only way to teach is through lectures. The lecture halls thus dictate a similar style of teaching to later generations of professors who might prefer - or be better at other styles of teaching. When seats are anchored to the floor, small group discussions are difficult if not impossible. Place a teacher behind a lectern with students rigidly placed in long lines before them and a blackboard anchored behind them, and more than likely that teacher will lecture, even against his will and best instincts. That is why I choose to teach in the student lounge where

\*Edited excerpts from address by Dr. Westerhoff at GRA Regional Conference, Duke University, October 10-12, 1975.

there can be movement, community, discussion and involvement in the learning process.

More significant, consider the changes in the family which correspond historically to the design of homes. Prior to the late eighteenth century in England, few persons lived in homes with differentiated space. There was little privacy. Persons came and went at will. Beds and tables were set up and taken down according to the moods and appetites of the occupants. Families tended to be larger. There was greater interaction and dependence. Certain values cooperation and community-were sustained and transmitted through the design of living space. By the close of the eighteenth century, living space had been altered. Rooms assumed names and specialized functions. There were living rooms, dining rooms, bedrooms (one per person), kitchens and bathrooms. New dominant values emerged at the same time-competition and individualism-and families became smaller and less intimate. Of course, these are broad generalizations, but that need not distract from my contention that space is terribly significant in its influence upon our understanding and way of life.

Let me further suggest a somewhat extreme hypothesis for examination. The development of differentiated living space seems to be related in some way to the separation of religion and life. As homes were built with halls dividing one specialized room from another, the church appears to have assumed an increasingly separate and distinct function in the culture. Similarly, we began to differentiate space within churches. There were rooms for worship, education and fellowship, each modeled after its secular counterpart. Space for worship often continued to have a distinctive quality, but sometimes it assumed the character of a hall. Educational space was modeled after the public school. And space for fellowship looked like the typical grange or American Legion hall. In turn, worship, education, fellowship and service became separate aspects of our religious lives; church life became estranged from the rest of life, and the church began to mirror the secular culture.

Recall that there was a day when the cathedral was at the heart of the community and had no differentiated space. The functions of education, fellowship, worship and service were united in a single space. Today, some of the most relevant cathedrals in England have eliminated their pews and are using their naves for all sorts of church and community activities.

I am aware that it is difficult to get church people to consider "one room" churches, but it might be helpful to explore our past so as to understand better how outside influences, no longer relevant, often determined how church space was ordered and designed. In New England, pews were not placed in our churches so that people could sit to pray. They stood to pray. Seats (pews) were built in boxes so that a family could sit in a circle (some with their backs to the pulpit), huddled together around their "heater" to keep warm during the long, two-hour sermons on cold winter days. Educational plants with classrooms were built when church education began to model itself after the public schools. And so it goes. Today we need to reconsider our life as a community of faith and redesign our space to correspond to that faith and the special needs of life in our day.

Instead of mirroring the culture, the church needs to ask the radical guestion of what it means to be human in community. That is not an unique architectural problem. If we are asked to design a park in a city, we also need to ask what it means to be human in community. To do so is to consider that the city itself provides walls and fences which help persons experience what it means to live within boundaries. Perhaps a park in a city needs to be devoid of walls and fences so that persons can experience openness, freedom and interaction. However, in the plains of the Southwest that same park may need architecturally attractive walls and fences to help persons experience what it means to live within bounds. Modern culture estranges aspects of our lives and hence alienates us from ourselves, our neighbors, nature and God. The church therefore needs to consider designing space that can aid in unifying us with each other, with ourselves, with nature and with God.

Such an aim also places other responsibilities upon us. Perhaps, for example, churches should be engaged in building space which can be heated by solar energy and be designed so as to destroy as little of the natural environment as possible. In cities we may need to consider seriously the recycling of old factories and design them so that they are integral to every aspect of community life. In any case, we should consider the importance of building one room churches which unite all of our lives as the people of God. This does not mean building a parish hall with the hope that some day we can build a building for worship. Churches should always be designed as sacred space rich in symbolism. This sacred space needs to be so designed that it can be used functionally in a variety of ways.

The church needs to become a meetinghouse for a community of faith. As such its design needs to take two factors into account: first, it should witness to the world the faith of those who gather within it; and second, it should provide an environment which aids persons in the growth and development of their faith. In one sense, the meetinghouse of the people of God can be best understood as a great living room which expresses the community's tradition and where the faithful gather to live their lives judged and inspired by their faith to the end that God's will be done.

Past ages responded creatively to their understanding and needs. Consider the early Sunday school. Our first space designed specifically for religious education in Protestant churches in America dates back to 1871. Known as the Akron Plan, it united the principles of togetherness and separateness with the importance of time. To accomplish these ends, they created a one-room building that could be divided into small units at a moment's notice. In the front of the room was a platform on which the superintendent's desk was

placed along with a lectern and a piano. Here lectures, music and drama were presented. To one side of the large room was a library, to the other a kitchen. Space on the lower level was open to house church suppers, parties, and productions of all sorts. Around the edges of this space and in the balcony were areas which could be closed off with partitions so that small groups could meet individually; partitions removed, the area was open to create a sense of oneness through shared activities. Later we modeled our educational space after the public schools with individual classrooms for each age group. Typically, each had chairs and a table, blackboard, bulletin boards and cabinets to hold curriculum resources and other educational materials. Many good educational programs were conducted in both architectural settings. But life continues to change. New challenges are before us. We cannot afford to perpetuate earlier designs.

For too long we have talked about the functions of church as being worship, education, fellowship and service. Such conceptualizations have influenced our designing churches into sanctuaries, educational plants, fellowship halls and offices. In such differentiated space we have had difficulty enabling persons to grow in faith and to live their lives as Christians. As a religious educator, I have been struggling with this problem for some time. I have concluded that we need to find new ways to understand our educational ministry. But I am painfully aware that this new understanding will necessitate a new understanding of space and new designs for churches. I should like to turn to that special problem.

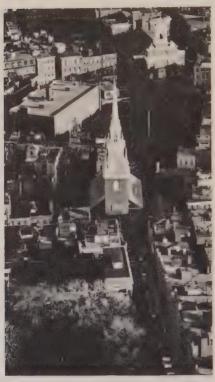
For too long we have associated education with schooling. We have, therefore, designed church schools with self-contained classrooms. These classrooms are used one hour each week for educational activities. When we plan religious education, we think only of what will occur in this specialized space. By doing so we estrange our educational mission from other activities in the church's life. We further neglect all the ways and places in which persons learn what it means to be Christian in the church. My contention is that we

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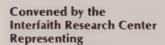
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# FAITH & BUILDINGS: A Study in Retrospect\*

Dr. Robert E. Cushman

Research Professor of Systematic Theology Duke University Divinity School, Durham, N.C.

In considering the topic of "Faith and Buildings," we need to remember that what we are prone to call "churches," meaning buildings, is not what the word meant to early Christians. The word "church" refered to the people of faith gathered to remember Christ, to give thanks, and to celebrate their salvation through him.

In Syria, at Dura-Europus on the Euphrates, about forty years ago there was excavated a house, which according to archaeologists was the gathering place of the local Christian community dating from 200 A.D. or earlier. It differed from other like dwellings only in a small room with a baptistry - a large square bath under a surviving canopy of stone or baldiquin. By this time then the gathering place of worship included provision for induction into the Christian faith, but still in a domestic setting.

For many reasons, including lack of means and recurrent persecution, it is generally agreed that buildings for Christian assembly and worship were modest and probably obscure throughout the second and third centuries. In Rome, the catacombs, while principally places of Christian burial, were not without small sanctuaries for worship - perhaps for the eucharist. The eucharist, we know from the Epistles of Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch (110 A.D.), was now integral to Christian worship. But on the whole, remnants of early Christian sanctuaries are rare and their identity disputed. It is evident that many, perhaps most, suffered demolition under the persecution of Diocletian between 303-305 A.D.

The first edict of 303 directed that church buildings throughout the Empire be demolished, the scriptures burned and the elders imprisoned.

\*Extract from address, GRA Regional Conference, Durham, N.C. October 1975.

The edict was vigorously prosecuted in Asia Minor, in Africa and in Italy and Spain. Eusebius of Caesarea - the great early Church historian - testifies to the destruction of church buildings, the burning of the holy scriptures in the marketplace that he himself witnessed.

It was not until the Edict of Milan (313 A.D.), issued jointly by Constantine and Maximinus, that Christianity was tolerated along with the civil religion of the Empire and surviving city-state cults and "the mysteries," including that of Mithra. Still it was not until Constantine became undisputed ruler of the Empire, in 323 and thereafter, that anything like Christian ecclesiastical architecture could or did become clearly visible and acquire the forms that were to predominate until after 16th century Reformation.

We might venture to say that almost coincident with the epoch-making Council of Nicea, in 325, did Christian worship come out as it were from "underground" and the birth of distinctively Christian ecclesiastical architecture take place. The liturgy of the churches, which had been in process of formulation for two centuries, was no longer under official proscription and popular suspicion, dispraise or attack. On the contrary, Christian worship was suddenly established as the religio of the Empire, and Constantine's concern was for housing this worship in a manner commensurate with its imperial standing and recognition. It is generally conceded that Constantine's fervor in this matter was sincere.

It may be admitted that his interest in church building and his extensive provision for it undoubtedly reflects his pagan heritage. To him nothing was plainer than that the now imperial worship of Jesus Christ called for the most evident visible manifestation of the "patron Deity" of the Empire. Constantine did not, I think,

transcend the concept of the role of the "civil religion" of the city states of the Pagan world. He universalized it, but in the name of Christ; a Christian ecclesiastical architecture rather suddenly began development on a majestic scale. Yet it took on form commensurate both with its imperial patronage and with its distinctive liturgy. The center and climax of worship was the sacrament of the altar. This was decisive for architectural format, structure and arrangement of the place of public worship.

If the ancient churches of Byzantium and of Catholic Europe remain overpowering in their sublimity and grandeur, the reason is clear. They stand for and are bridges between the divine and the human. They are the pre-eminent symbols in stone and wood of the way from God to man and vice versa. Nothing, therefore, is too good or too much; nothing need to be reserved in celebrating in stone, wood, alabaster, ivory, in mosaic, in fresco, or in fabrics and precious stones what is signified to believers as the very narthex of "the life of God in the soul of man."

A brief comment on faith and buildings as reflected in my own Protestant heritage. The span of centuries is far shorter: there is less to say and much of it is familiar. The three centuries - between 1550 to 1850 - are the period in which rather spontaneously the correlation between the Protestant faith and its building, quite naturally portrays itself. Among other things, it is before the sophisticated experimentation of 20th century functionalism and technological know-how have complicated the domain of eccelsiastical architecture. And there is another side of the matter. I want to stay clear of an era when Protestant churchmen have become somewhat vague as to their own theological and liturgical pedigree, and in addition to the lures of utility, are sometimes prone to various kinds of improvisation - often for aesthetic reasons primarily and often in unwitting disregard of their distinctive doctrinal tradition architecturally expressed. This was not the case with Calvinist 16th and 17th century Independents, most Baptists and the early Methodists.

If we look at the 17th and 18th centuries, we do find natural correlations. between Reformed faith and church buildings which authenticate themselves. The Lutheran churches, about which I know least, combine an emphasis upon both sacramental worship and preaching and are structured accordingly. The Protestant Episcopal tradition had few changes to make in old England - and in America, on the whole, was content to perpetuate the several styles of English Gothic in which the liturgy of the Prayer Book had been bred in the 16th century. If, in late years, a cluster of parish houses have been added, this too was not without ancient precedent even if the modern additions were more regularly employed for parish educational and community purposes.

As I see it, the Reformed churches of the Calvinistic tradition most emphatically and perhaps authentically correlate the Reformed faith and church architecture. This is visible in the Presbyterian churches of Scotland of the period we are considering and in the Congregational churches of New England of the 18th century.

The Congregational meetinghouse in New England had a two-fold purpose. One was civil; the other, and the controlling one, was religious. This duality of function goes back to 17th century Puritan theocracy. Theocracy did not survive the mid-18th century. Nevertheless, the meetinghouse continued to symbolize the coordination of piety and civil order down to the establishment of the Republic, and indeed beyond.

In those meetinghouses one thing was made unmistakably clear by the centrality and loftiness of the pulpit. It was the sovereignty of the Word of God, recited from Scripture, and interpreted by the preached word often in sermons that could last two or more hours - to be followed by a further discourse in the afternoon. To endure this, each family was responsible for its own footwarmers in its own family box pews during the winter months. Meanwhile, the sacraments were duly administered every quarter for the elect. To all others the table was "fenced." and order

was preserved by the ruling elder.

The early Methodist meetinghouse was not wholly dissimilar in England or in America. Here the Reformation stress upon the preached Word turned the building into something like an auditorium where the grace of God was channeled by the medium of the sermon and by "hymns and spiritual songs," and after 1784 the sacraments were duly administered in American Methodism. This called for a provision of a chancel and altar or "table or remembrance."

The chaste, honest simplicity of the Congregational meetinghouse made it a thing of beauty, and in its finest examples second to none in architectural integrity. As a symbol of piety it speaks both of intellectual rigor and doctrinal clarity. Yet it also speaks of a religious persuasion from which the elements of mystery and sublimity have much withdrawn and for which piety has often become subscription to a refined confession of faith wrought out on the anvil of the 16th and 17th century controversy with a decadent Catholicism and a moribund papacy.

I believe it is clear that there is a close correlation between the nature of Christian faith and the building which is a vehicle of its nurture and expression. I would venture to say that taking function for granted as an inescapable norm for institutional church building today, nothing could more advance the integrity of modern ecclesiastical architecture than for churchmen to be able to give a clear-headed account of the faith and hope that is in them.

You may be disappointed perhaps that I have not carried this correlation of faith and its buildings into the recent past or present. There are many reasons. The most important is that my assignment was to discuss the Christian faith in relation to its architectural expressions. Plainly, it is easier to do so where this correlation has clearly identifiable expression. Another reason is that the problem of correlation intensifies in the increasingly multifarious formats of church architecture in American denominations, not just of the recent

#### **Function and Building**

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need to expand our understanding of education to include all those deliberate, systematic and sustained ways by which persons and groups evolve, sustain and transmit their faith.

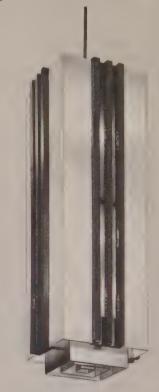
If we are to begin to think holistically about education, we need to consider milti-use space. As I said earlier, this space can be used for almost every activity within a church. (If it is necessary to provide special space for young children, I suggest it be enclosed in glass so that parents and children can visibly and audibly participate in the community's liturgy while interacting together in ways that will not disturb others.) I contend that this space, while sacred in character, needs to be contemporary in design. Each age must express its faith anew. Further, our churches need to be designed for the use of no more than one to two hundred persons. If a congregation is larger they can duplicate activities. It is not only difficult to experience community in large groups, but we have a responsibility not to create large structures for limited use in a day of limited resources

There are signs that the church is moving in directions which make such design possible. A new appreciation of the arts is returning. A desire for community and intergenerational activity is surfacing. New forms of worship are emerging. New models of religious education are being developed. Religious education may or may not occur on Sundays. It will bring together children, youth and adults for common activities. Music, dance, drama and the plastic arts provide the dominant forms of expression. Integral to its life is celebration, the focus of its program is the Judeo-Christian story, and its primary concern is for opportunities to be religious together.

The following is an example of a small New England congregation. At a church meeting each year the people decide on a series of themes for their Sunday School. Last year they chose Moses and the Exodus, Advent-Christmas, Contemporary Christians and Life in the Early Church. The Sunday School meets intergencon't. page 22

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# Further on "Reflections - San Antonio"

E. A. Sövik, FAIA

Sövik, Mathre, Sathrum, Quanbeck Northfield, Minnesota

One would be a bit hesitant to enter a dialogue with some astronaut on a star so distant that an answer arrives six months after a question is asked. A letter of reaction to a writer in FAITH & FORM has about the same time delay, which is disconcerting: but I think Father McAlister's "Reflections" in the Fall 1975 issue need a response-so I am going to venture one. And although much of what he said seems to me valuable, and I want to pay my respects to his concern and his goodwill, I am going to select for brevity's sake some parts of his discussion that seem to me to be at fault for one reason or another.

Father McAlister warns us about tampering with myths. I agree that one needs to be cautious; but one must not be too timid. Each generation needs to reappropriate or repristinate myths. An unexamined myth is a dead one. History is change, and sometimes cyclical; what I think we are doing is attaching ourselves not to our grandfather's myths, but to those that are much, much older.

Father McAlister notes that many congregations are not ready to accept multi-use space for worship. This is surely true, but not very relevant. Thirty years ago, equally few were ready to give up the historical styles. Nor is the comment that young people are dubious about multi-use space very relevant. Most young people are resistant to change — maybe more so than older people who have seen more of it.

The paragraph marked five needs a little more attention. Father Mc-Alister says much of what I would like to say, but I would not use the words "secular" and "profane" interchangeably as he does. He says that a place of worship should have those qualities that "instill respect, reverence and ultimately a sense of the sacred." I agree. But I would assert that these qualities can be, and ought to be, present not only in places of worship, but in all the work that

religious designers do, whether for cultic purposes or non-cultic (secular) purposes. The whole earth is the Lord's temple; it should be treated as a holy place. Architecture is profane (outside the temple) not when it is secular (non-cultic) but when it lacks the sense of the sacred.

In subsequent paragraphs, Father McAlister notes that people need certain qualities, among them the quality of permanence. He implies that a single-purpose use of a space provides this sense of permanence. It may, but this has nothing to do with architectural qualities. I think that the evidence shows that if a place is beautiful, its uses may change, but its "sacred" character remains. Consider St. Sophia or the Parthenon; their uses have changed, but their "sacred" character persists. It is associated with the architecture, not the uses of the place. At present they are both "secular" places, but they provide evidence that "secularity" and "sacredness" can co-exist.

It is necessary, of course, that architects pay attention to the clients for whom they work—and very close attention. But good art never has and never will result from polling a community to see what people like; it comes from the perceptions of good artists. I am not denigrating the research attempt to discover "where people are," although a good artist probably has an intuitive sense of this. It is more important to discover where they ought to be.

And to use a phrase like "ought to be" implies that change is desirable. Father McAlister warns us vigorously against precipitous change, and I concur. But I rather like the fact that candles have appeared in dormitory rooms and that religious observance has in other ways escaped from the "sanctuary." If we are trying to build the Kingdom of God, we need to change things in the churches as well as in the world. There was, after all,

some truth in the accusation made against the early Christians that they were "turning the world upside down."

I should like also to comment on the episodes from the life of Jesus that Father McAlister cites. I would interpret them quite differently. When Jesus went to the wilderness to pray rather than to the temple, he was a secularist-the encounter with God, he was implying is not necessarily in a cultic place. And surely one cannot infer from Jesus' detaching himself from the throngs of people when he wanted to pray, that we ought to be building single-purpose places of worship. The room where the Last Supper was held may very well have been a restaurant; it was clearly not a cultic place, but a secular one.

Finally, I am much more sanguine about the hopes that Christians of all denominations - not excluding Roman Catholics-can accommodate themselves to multi-use structures than is Father McAlister. (Whether unsophisticated people want multiuse places or not, is not really the issue, of course. Whether this sort of structure is right or wrong, is the issue. If it is right, we should be doing our best to illuminate and persuade.) I recently saw a doctoral dissertation which studied the uses of 146 church buildings in Hong Kong, affiliated with a broad spectrum of Christian denominations. Among those whose worship spaces were also used for other purposes, the Episcopalians led, Roman Catholics and Methodists weren't far behind, Lutherans were about in the middle; and unexpectedly, some of the socalled "free churches" were those who preserved their worship spaces most eagerly for single-purpose usage.

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#### **Function and Building**

con't. from page 20

erationally for four blocks of time during the year. Each thematic unit is assigned to a group of families. They create and lead the Sunday School for that period. The first block of time runs from the first day of school through Thanksgiving. During the summer those who were interested prepared a dramatization of episodes in Moses' life. In the first week of Sunday School they presented their dramatization. During the next week interest groups were formed. There was an opportunity to make unleavened bread, to create poetry of modern parallels to Moses' experience, and there was an art group to illustrate the poetry. Other activities were taken from The Jewish Catalogue, one of the truly great resources for religious education and a good example of the sort of resources needed for the Sunday School of the future. There was even a group who used the dark, dirt-filled, junk-strewn basement of the church to create a simulation of the Israelites' faith during the darkness of the long exodus. Two weeks of such activity led to two weeks of planning a Seder, using Waskow's Freedom Seder as the basis for their celebration. At last they united for that special occasion. This was followed by two weeks of preparation for a special Thanksgiving celebration. Here was an opportunity to identify their Congregational Puritan history with the Exodus. The unit ended with a grand Thanksgiving celebration, at which five grains of corn were put at everyone's place; a child asked why, and the story of one year when that was all their forefathers and foremothers had to give thanks for was told. After a few weeks people were ready to begin their Advent-Christmas theme.

Of course it will take time before change is generally accepted. New architectural designs will be necessary to support the new programs. We must be careful not to design buildings which will lock us into programs that make this alternative future difficult. The architect has an unique opportunity to engage the church in re-thinking its life and faith by reminding us all that we not only shape our buildings; they shape

us. The opportunity to build is the opportunity of a community of faith to struggle with their faith and to design space that will enable them to become a faithful people. The future is open and you have been granted the God-given talents to serve in this most important endeavor. Be of good courage as you strive to shape a community's faith into forms which will enable them to function as a faithful people. And always remember that your responsibility is awesome—your task is great—and your calling is noble.

Notes & Comments con't. from page 5

#### **Bicentennial Exhibitions**

200 Years of American Synagogue Architecture—The American Jewish experience reflects a striving towards ritual enhancement of its synagogues.

Brandeis University, Rose Museum, Waltham, Mass.—Spring and Summer, 1976

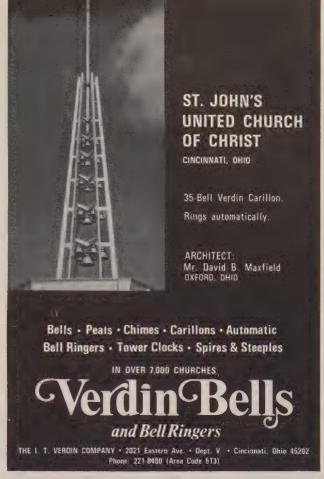
Spertus Museum of Judaica, Chicago, III. – October '76 through January '77

# Why GRA Regional Conferences?

During the past five years the GRA has held a series of Regional Conferences - often in co-sponsorship with religious groups-Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University, the Divinity School at Duke University, etc. The Regional Conferences reflect the GRA's awareness of the changes taking place within the organized church today and the need for effective dialogue and communication between architects and clergymen. It is felt that smaller meetings can provide fuller participation among registrants and speakers-and that specific topics of perhaps regional interest lend themselves more readily to one or two-day meetings.

Faith, Function, Form—Environment's Influence upon Man—Church-sponsored Housing—Churches, Crises and Change—have been among the topics dealt with at GRA regional meet-

con't. page 24





#### **Notes & Comments cont.**

ings. Groups of architects, clergymen and concerned lay persons have gathered to hear addresses from experts in specific areas and to participate in discussion of common interests and problems in an informal setting.

The GRA plans to continue its program of regional meetings, one being scheduled for the Washington, D.C. area under the joint sponsorship of GRA and Catholic University of America, November 12-14, 1976. The Guild invites FAITH & FORM readers—individuals or groups—to contact Guild office if they are interested in a regional meeting in their area. Write: Guild for Religious Architecture, 1777 Church St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

#### Myron E. Schoen, Director, Commission on Synagogue Administration, UAHC, writes:

Have you designed a synagogue in the last decade? The Union of American Hebrew Congregations, which has maintained an Architects Advisory Panel for more than 25 years, is contemplating the publication of a book on significant synagogue buildings since 1965. It was the UAHC that published An American Synagogue for Today &Tomorrow in 1954 (edited by Peter Blake) and Contemporary Synagogue Art: Developments in the U.S. 1945-65 by Prof. Avram Kampf.

If you have designed a synagogue building in the last decade, please

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communicate with me at UAHC, 838 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10021. It would be helpful if you could send not only the name and address of the congregation but could also provide photos, slides and floor plans.

## Worship, Liturgy, and Building con't. from page 7

members and at the same time give thanks for the grace which God has made known to all through this sacrament.

The fact that worship is corporate has important ramifications for the arrangement of congregational seatting; it is imperative that worshippers be properly related to each other as well as to the liturgical center.

These five facets of Christian faith proclaimed in the functions of worship are not unfortunately adequately supported by most architectural forms now in existence. Any attempt to provide a set design for contemporary liturgy would be futile. Indeed, the current state of liturgy is so fluid that it defies fixed designs. But since different functions exist in worship, different forms are needed if a consistent statement of faith is to be made.

Because flexibility is so important, the cardinal rule for contemporary liturgical design is "Don't nail anything down." Violation of this rule can turn liturgy from a living thing into a corpse imprisioned within a coffin. And no matter how beautiful or well-proportioned the coffin may be, the liturgy confined within it is quite dead.

But consider the possibilities when flexibility does exist. The liturgical center itself can be adjusted both in size and location. Movable platforms allow a large space for liturgical drama, for example. On other kinds of occasions the platform may well be much smaller, with the congregation gathered in an arc of 1800 or less. (The complete church-in-the-round concept works better in theory than practice with respect to traditional liturgical functions.) In all cases, worshippers should be as close to the liturgical center as possible and

should not be separated into isolated units.

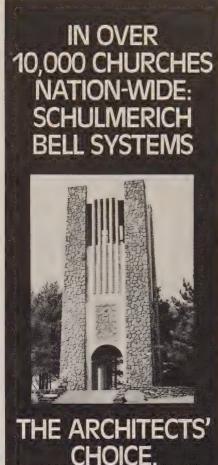
Flexibility is intended to serve real liturgical needs, not to satisfy a yen for novelty. Rearrangement for its own sake soon wears thin. Those responsible for inventing new arrangements quickly exhaust the possibilities, and those who move the furnishings soon grow weary of shuffling things around when no real purpose is served. But the full proclamation of the Gospel requires a variety of worship services. Therefore flexibility of form is the servant of faith as well as the servant of function.

## Church Architecture of the 1970's con't from page 11

Once one has such a space in which to plan worship, free and uncluttered by architectural focus, it is hard indeed to go back to a space where there is no freedom. And it is amazing how many imaginative possibilities in worship open up once one has nondirectional space. The most intriguing space I have ever worked in was an experimental theater where we were limited only by our own imagination. How hard it was to return from that to a directional church with a chancel!

We have discovered something we never knew before, the importance of flexibility. Why should a building be always the same for every occasion? Christmas is not Good Friday, a wedding is not a funeral, a Sunday morning congregation is not a Sunday evening assemblage. Yet we have often been content with a building that was always the same. Today, a wall is anything we want to project on it. Flexibility is vertical as well as horizontal. We built towers of steel scaffolding in our chapel once to convince students of that; our freedom is not limited to the arrangement of the floor alone.

I feel that the most satisfactory building shape for worship, as we know it now, is what I call a "hollow cube." I once convinced a student congregation to build such a worship space. I think they built it almost out of blind faith; now they can try experiments in worship that no other con't. page 26



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## Church Architecture of the 1970's con't. from page 25

church in town can accommodate. "Hollow cube" may not be the best of terms but it does express the basic sense of directionless space capable of a variety of orientation, of a level floor, of nothing nailed down or predetermined. In many cases the vertical dimension may be less than the horizontal ones, certainly not greater than they.

A major change has occurred from the long history of church buildings with a very definite orientation either around a high altar or an equally high pulpit. We must remember, though, that until churches were filled up with pews, congregations remained mobile and essentially non-directional. The non-directional church building of today gives us both freedom and responsibility. For it is up to us to create the focus where it belongs for whatever occasion we are planning. The building interior, then, becomes a dynamic space where new centers of action can be created for whatever the occasion may be.

#### V

A fifth area of change is closely related, namely that of seating. We are finally realizing how much Christians lost when they sat down on the job in worship somewhere about the fourteenth century. The fluid and mobile congregation became an immobilized mass, wedged into a series of pews. And how we cherished those comfortable pews! I well remember the astonished disbelief I encountered when I first began questioning pews a dozen years ago, especially from one building committee that included a salesman from a pew company! Today, I suspect his firm also offers movable church seating; certainly its competitors do. A major breakthrough came when the St. Louis Episcopal Cathedral removed its pews in late 1969 or early 1970 and replaced them with movable seating. We could persuade people that if it could be done successfully in such a magnificent gothic structure, certainly it could be done elsewhere.

One sometimes wonders: if we were really on our feet for worship (as Christians were for most of our history) would we need chairs at all? One solution in a California student congregation was a series of freeform risers in the floor with carpeted treads. These were relatively permanent but focused on no particular spot. Younger people often feel more comfortable sitting on the floor in their own proximities; I doubt you could sell that to older people who would just as soon be comfortable and keep their own distance.

The great advantage of movable seating, of course, is flexibility. One can shape the service around the people who are there, not around a mass of pews that may be unoccupied. A church with pews for two hundred is half empty when a hundred people show up. But the same congregation in a space set up with a hundred chairs will prompt the response that so many people have come that we may have to bring in extra chairs. Which is primary, the people who are there or the vacant furniture? Movable chairs put the focus on actual people and secondly on the event. Perhaps the seating should focus on the font for some occasions, about a pulpit for others. We have these options and many more. With fixed seating we have no such choices.

Some manufacturers now make short movable pews which are attractive and heavy enough not to tip over. These may often be as satisfactory and cheaper than movable chairs. Unfortunately, as soon as we mention movable seating, most people think of the cheap metal chairs on which they have suffered for years. Good movable seating is not cheap. But if it gives us several buildings instead of one frozen space, it may be the biggest bargain we can get. Such seating ought to be attractive, capable of ganging (linking) comfortable, and stackable (there are times when we will want to get rid of seating altogether). At any rate, movable seating is both a cause and a reflection of the changes we have seen in worship in recent years. Without it, many of our experiments would have been impossible; with it, we have attempted things we never could have dreamed of with a nailed down congregation.

Yes, the church architecture of the 1970s is something quite different from that of the 1960s. But it will not stand still either. Those things that we find so true and obvious today will not all be so tomorrow. Anyone who builds today must shudder a bit at the danger of tying knots in the future. Certainly we cannot build with the bold confidence of those who built in the early 1960s. We have seen the Middle Ages in Catholic worship end overnight and Protestant worship thaw almost as guickly, all within a decade. We know now how risky it is to assume that our needs for worship space will remain unchanging so we have become much more reticent builders. Humility is not such a bad virtue in architecture or in life.

Perhaps change, then, is the greatest difference. Our church architecture has become open to change. Though it cannot guess the directions of future change, at least it has come to accept change as inevitable. And this is something that church architecture of past centuries never took seriously. This greater openness to new possibilities is the major accomplishment of church architecture in our times. For this we should all be grateful.

## Faith & Building con't. from page 19

past but of the entire past century, indeed since the middle of the 19th century. And I am not sure that much of a correlation between faith and church architecture survives in the modern period. This is a doubt that is not relieved by a statement of Dr. James White ("Church Architecture of the 1970's," reprinted from Liturgy in this issue of FAITH & FORM): "I feel the most satisfactory building shape for worship, as we know it now, is what I call a 'hollow cube'." If indeed Christian worship has come to require this measure of vacuity, then I would think more suitable would be a hollow tube through which we might look to a recovered awareness of necessary correlation of the Christian tradition and its housing for worship.

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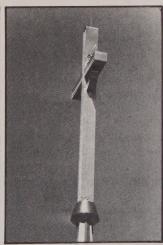
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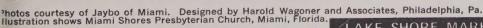




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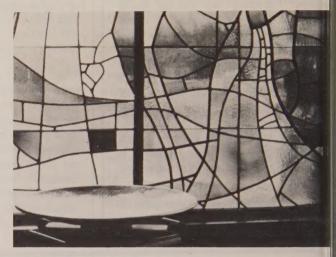
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The Guild for Religious Architecture is, we believe, justifiably proud of its record of service to the professional and religious communities. Organized in 1940 by a small group of architects and clergymen, the Guild began its program to improve the design and function of religious facilities. Primarily this effort was carried on through the National Conference, an annual meeting at which architects, religious leaders, craftsmen and artists traded ideas, compared notes, discussed common interests and problems, and nurtured each other through a common desire to serve the worshipping community. In 1965 the Guild became an affiliate of The American Institute of Architects to serve as the arm of the Institute in the area of religious design.

The Annual National Conference continues—broadened in scope and interfaith in structure. This year's conference will be held at Boston, July 6-8. Regional conferences over the past five years have further dem-

onstrated the Guild's interest in providing information, guidelines and assistance to groups wishing a one- or two-day meeting on a specific topic.

FAITH & FORM, journal of the Guild for Religious Architecture, has been a significant tool in the educational process which the Guild pursues. By reproducing speeches from annual and regional meetings, by featuring the architectural and arts award winners from the Annual Conferences, by attempting to provide the most current information available on trends in religious design as they reflect changes in liturgy, FAITH & FORM seeks to reach a broader audiences than can be reached through meetings.

To continue its service—and to continue its program, the Guild for Religious Architecture needs the support of the professional and religious communities. It seeks your membership. You are cordially invited to join and to participate in a continuing and on-going effort. A membership application is attached.



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## GUILD FOR RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE Membership Application, page 2

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